

System Configuration Team (SCT)

Reasonable & Prudent Measure #26 Meeting Notes December 20, 2001

Greetings and Introductions.

The December 20 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held at the National Marine Fisheries Service offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin of NMFS and facilitated by Richard Forester. The agenda and a list of attendees for the December 20 meeting are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced may be too lengthy to routinely include with the meeting notes; copies of all enclosures referred to in the minutes are available upon request from Kathy Ceballos of NMFS at 503/230-5420.

1. November SCT Notes.

Hevlin asked anyone with comments on the draft minutes from the November SCT meeting to bring them to the January 31 SCT meeting.

3. Briefing on the Action Agencies' FY'02 Annual Implementation Plan.

BPA's Ken Barnhardt provided a brief update on the annual implementation plan (AIP) process; he noted that the AIP is essentially a subset of the five-year implementation plan. Barnhardt added that the both the one-year and the five-year implementation plans are now available via the <http://www.salmonrecovery.gov> website.

Barnhardt noted that the action agencies are now working on their 2001 progress report, which will lay out which recovery actions were and were not implemented in FY'01; this document is expected to be available in February. NMFS will then issue their findings on that progress report, and the annual cycle will begin all over again, Barnhardt said. He added that the progress report will also be posted to the <http://www.salmonrecovery.gov> website as soon as it is completed.

4. FY'02 CRFM Program Review.

Kranda distributed the most recent version of the FY'02 CRFM spreadsheet, noting that it has not been updated since the last SCT meeting. As you're aware, he said, we have enough funding in FY'02 to work through the medium-priority projects, but again, very little has changed since the last meeting of this group.

Kranda and Rock Peters went through a few minor changes that will be made to the next version of the spreadsheet. The bottom line, said Kranda, is that we're about \$13 million short of the \$81 million needed for the FY'02 CRFM budget, due to savings and slippage. We're assuming that we can get some of the savings and slippage back in FY'02 as we did in FY'01, but at this point, we've only got \$68 million in hand, said Mike Mason – we're hoping we can find some additional savings once the final estimates come in. In response to a question from Ron Boyce, Kranda said he does not know when the Corps will find out if, and how much, of the FY'02 savings and slippage can be restored.

When is the next major FY'02 CRFM contract due to be advertised? Hevlin asked. The B2 corner collector contract in April, Kranda replied. In response to a request, Kranda said the Corps will provide the SCT a list of the FY'02 contracts that will carry over into FY'03.

5. Accelerated Construction Schedule Option for B2 Corner Collector.

Hevlin distributed Enclosure C, a memo laying out the accelerated construction schedule option for the B2 corner collector. This is primarily an information item, said Hevlin, but it's on today's agenda because of its potential effects on the FY'02 and FY'03 CRFM budgets. The handout includes a strawman list of line-items which could represent potential deferrals in order for work on the corner collector to proceed on a fast track. However, just yesterday, John Kranda told me that the Corps no longer considers the accelerated construction schedule to be a desirable option, Hevlin said.

Doug Clark went through the Corps' thought process on the accelerated B2 corner collector construction decision in more detail. The bottom line, he said, is that concerns about the quality of the available concrete contractors, as well as the financial impacts to other projects, have caused the Corps to conclude that trying to complete the corner collector by 2003 probably isn't feasible, and that adhering to the current construction schedule makes the most sense.

In response to a question from Bruce Suzumoto, Clark said the current cost estimate for the B2 corner collector without the accelerated schedule is about \$50 million, \$32 million of which will need to come out of the FY'03 budget if construction is to be complete by 2004, up from the \$27.5 million shown in the current version of the FY'03 CRFM spreadsheet. A further \$10 million will be needed in FY'04. If we pursue the accelerated schedule, he added, the current estimate of the FY'03 cost for this line-item would be \$39 million.

So where do we go with this agenda item? Forester asked. When this was placed on the agenda, we had thought we were going to ask the SCT for a decision about whether or not to proceed with the accelerated construction schedule on the B2 corner collector, Kranda replied – now, however, given our concerns about concrete quality and financial impacts, it is somewhat

moot. Mainly, this is F.Y.I., said Clark – it's not that we couldn't complete the corner collector in 2003, but at this point, we simply don't feel that the benefits of an accelerated construction schedule outweigh the risks. I think that's a prudent decision on the part of the Corps, Suzumoto said.

6. FY'03 CRFM Program – Development of a Work Plan to Address Potential Budget Constraints in FY'03 and Future Years.

Hevlin referred the group's attention to the strawman list, on page 2 of Enclosure C, of items to be deferred or curtailed in FY'02 and FY'03 in the event of budgetary constraints. He and Kranda spent a few minutes going through this list; Kranda noted that there is only about \$8 million of medium-priority work in the \$81 million FY'02 budget; everything else in the FY'02 CRFM budget is high-priority work. In FY'03, however, said Kranda, we're estimating that it will cost \$101 million just to do the high-priority work. That doesn't mean the SCT can't revisit its prioritizations, he said, but it is becoming clear that this group is going to have its work cut out for it, if current CRFM funding trends continue into the future.

What's the probability of getting \$95 million for CRFM in FY'03? Suzumoto asked. I can't answer that right now, Kranda replied; we'll have a President's budget in February, at which point we'll have a better idea of the funds that will be available, although Congress will also have a say in the appropriation. Rod Woodin observed that the chances of such a significant increase are not good, given recent budgetary trends.

The group spent a few minutes going through the strawman list of items to be deferred or curtailed, which, if fully implemented, would shave approximately \$20 million from the FY'03 CRFM budget. After a few minutes of discussion, Ron Boyce suggested that the SCT use the next several months to re-prioritize the high- and medium-priority items in the FY'03 and out-year budgets relative to one another. There was general agreement that such a forward-thinking exercise would be extremely useful.

Given the fact that we're unlikely to have more than \$240 million with which to accomplish the high-priority projects in the next three years of the CRFM program, said Boyce, it makes sense to really think ahead about how to get the most bang for our buck.

Ultimately, there was general agreement that revisiting the relative priority of the high-priority items in future CRFM spreadsheets would be a very useful exercise for the SCT, particularly once the Corps provides its list of FY'02 contracts that will carry over into FY'03.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the best way to come to grips with this task. In response to a request, Kranda agreed to produce a version of the spreadsheet reconfigured by project category (juvenile passage, adult passage, research etc.). It was also suggested that a current, project-by-project configuration analysis, with planned research and construction activities, would be very useful, although Peters warned that such an analysis would be extremely time- and labor-intensive. It was also agreed to revisit the SCT prioritization criteria, and assess their adequacy to assist in this new task. Boyce also requested that NMFS lay out the fish passage strategies in the 2000 Biological Opinion; Hevlin agreed to provide this. Peters added that a list of the species which would benefit or suffer from each line-item would

also be helpful. It was agreed to schedule the first out-year high priorities re-prioritization discussion for the SCT's January 31 meeting.

7. Updates:

a. Portland District FFDRWG. Peters briefed the SCT on the most important items discussed at the December 10 Portland District FFDRWG meetings, including:

- Bonneville adult fallback
- Bonneville Decision Document
- B2 JBS follow-on
- B2 FGE improvements
- Bonneville FPE and survival
- B1 surface bypass
- Bonneville corner collector
- Bonneville adult PIT
- Bonneville flow deflectors
- Bonneville adult fish collection and monitoring facility
- The Dalles project survival program
- The Dalles spillway improvement study
- The Dalles SGID
- The Dalles sluice outfall site relocation
- Adult channel dewatering modifications
- John Day survival
- John Day RSW
- John Day screens ESBS
- The turbine survival program

Kim Fodrea described the recent leakage problems in the Bonneville adult PIT-tag detection antennas, noting that nine of the 24 antennas have leaked. The units have been redesigned, and replacement antennas are on the way, she said; the installation is also being improved so that the units can be removed and installed much more easily. Steve Pettit asked whether there is a chance that, if further antenna failures occur, the adult fishway would have to be dewatered, possibly during peak fish passage season, to allow replacement antennas to be installed; Fodrea assured him that this would not be the case.

B. SRWG Update. Peters distributed a list of the individual Portland District research projects now under consideration by the Studies Review Work Group; final proposals are now in hand, and contract awards will be made in January. He went briefly through this list, noting which studies have and have not been approved for funding next year.

8. Next SCT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for Thursday, January 31. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.